



Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority Testimony **IN SUPPORT** (with modifications) HB 6664  
**AN ACT MANAGING WASTE AND CREATING A WASTE AUTHORITY**

**Environment Committee Public Hearing – Monday, February 27, 2023**

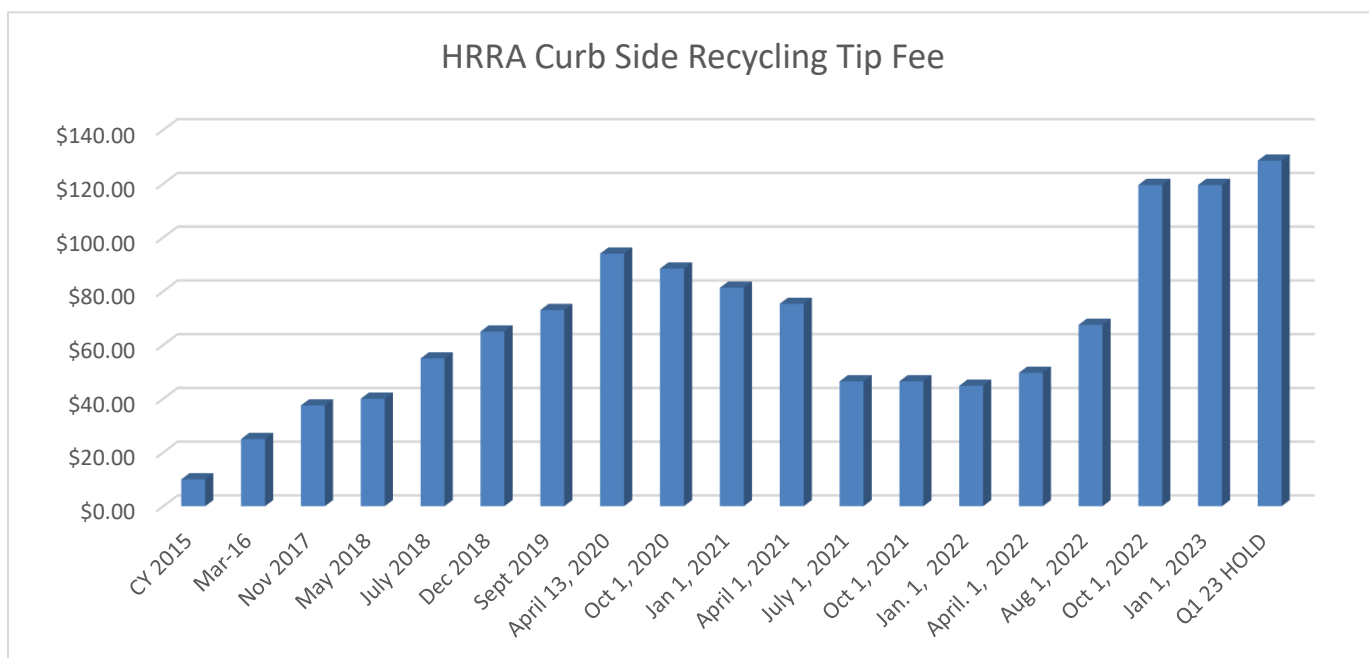
**To:** Honored Co-Chairs, Sen. Lopes and Rep. Gresko, and distinguished Members of the Environment Committee,

The Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority is the regional, governmental, solid waste and recycling authority for 14 Municipalities in Western Connecticut that include *Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, Kent, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Roxbury, Sherman & Weston, and Wilton.*

**The HRRR supports Section 1 of HB 6664**

The State of Connecticut urgently needs to improve material management programs that will address the state's solid waste issues. Connecticut's local governments have experienced drastically increased recycling costs due to fluctuating and reduced markets and confusing labeling on packaging.

Although the HRRR region is predominantly private subscription, the Town of Newtown, with a population of 27,000 residents, provides curbside recycling at the taxpayers expense of approximately \$1 million annually. The recycling tips in the HRRR region have risen from \$10 a ton to over \$120 per ton due to market conditions.



**HOUSATONIC RESOURCES RECOVERY AUTHORITY**  
162 WHISCONIER ROAD, OLD TOWN HALL, BROOKFIELD CT 06752  
203.775.4539 | [www.hrra.org](http://www.hrra.org) | [info@hrra.org](mailto:info@hrra.org)

BRIDGEWATER | BETHEL | BROOKFIELD | DANBURY | KENT | NEW FAIRFIELD | NEW MILFORD  
NEWTOWN | REDDING | RIDGEFIELD | ROXBURY | SHERMAN | WESTON | WILTON

The HRRR region has nearly seventy registered private haulers collecting and transporting waste and recycling. The small haulers whose sole business is to collect, and who do not own or operate transfer stations and or material recovery facilities are at the mercy of industry when it comes to disposal cost.

More than 12,000 tons of recycling was managed through the HRRR system in 2022. At today's current rate that's a cost of \$1,572,096 in tip fees alone. That does not include the cost to collect and transfer the material to a local transfer station. In 2015 the same tonnage would have cost \$122,820 in tip fees. The rate in which markets change is unsustainable. These cost must be shared with the manufacturers and producers as they decide what material is entered into the environment, and determine what the material is worth as post-consumer recycled content.

This policy is not intended to replace the collection system already in place across Connecticut, but rather to provide financial relief to both the hauling industry and municipalities that collect and dispose of paper and packaging material.

We are not the first in the country to propose such policies. Globally, over 40 countries and provinces have packaging EPR programs – many of which have been in place for more than 35 years – and some track recycling rates as high as 80%.

Four states – Maine, Oregon, Colorado, and California – have already enacted packaging EPR laws and a dozen others are considering such bills this year.

**Packaging EPR does not raise prices for consumers.** A study conducted by Resource Recycling Systems and funded by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality analyzed prices before and after EPR legislation passed in Canada and found no evidence that they increased; in Europe, where programs have been in operation for more than three decades, prices have also remained stable.

In fact, without EPR, consumers pay three times: First for the packaging of the product, which is included in the cost...A second time for the collection and recycling or disposal of that packaging through their municipal taxes or private subscription costs...And a third time for the indirect associated costs of pollution.

We strongly encourage Connecticut to adopt Packaging EPR legislation so that municipalities will no longer have to carry the financial burden of recycling the packaging chosen by brand owners.

**We support with modification Section 2** for post-consumer recycled content standards. This proposal only applies to plastic beverage containers. PCR standards should also apply to glass food and beverage containers.

**We support Section 3** which allows DEEP to partner with municipalities or regional waste authorities (with their consent) to issue an RFP for waste infrastructure. DEEP currently does not have this authority.

**We support Section 4** which allows municipalities to make provisions to contract separately for collection and delivery of food scraps or other organic material to facilities authorized for processing and beneficial use of such material.

**We support Section 5** which provides universal access to source separated food scraps collection by requiring municipalities and haulers to provide those options by 2028. All residents of the state of Connecticut should have easy, accessible options for disposal of all waste streams. If the state of Connecticut is going to take a comprehensive approach to solid waste management this five-year plan is reasonable and necessary to meet the state's waste diversion goals. Although the language provides that participation by the individual is voluntary, it is recommended that over time the state consider banning food waste from the municipal solid waste stream.

**We support Section 6** which clarifies that municipalities can, by ordinance, add food scraps and food processing residues to their own lists of designated recyclable items.

**We support Section 7** which updates the Commercial Organics Recycling Law to add transfer stations or other locations that receive source-separated organic materials to the list of facilities that trigger the 20-mile radius for compliance with the law. It also adds "institutions" (i.e., hospitals, entertainment venues, educational facilities, and correctional facilities) to the list of commercial entities that must source separate food scraps for recycling if they generate over ½ ton per week and are located within 20 miles of a triggering facility.

**We support with modification Section 8**, which raises the state's solid waste assessment from \$1.50 to \$3.00 per ton for MSW sent to WTE facilities; and creates a \$5.00 per ton assessment for MSW sent to commercial transfer stations and volume reduction plants for any MSW that is not recycled. This change removes the existing economic incentive to export MSW for landfilling. However, in-state capacity must be satisfied before implementing the SWA for out-of-state disposal. It is an unfair assessment to municipalities that do not have a choice to send material out of state due to the lack of current capacity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jennifer Heaton-Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer A. Heaton-Jones  
Executive Director, HRRRA